

# THE AWAKENING

## Chapter 35 — Narrator Script (Booth Ready)

by Kate Chopin · narrated by Mike Vendetti & Kathy Verduin

Léonce Pontellier   Edna Pontellier   Robert Lebrun   Madame Lebrun   Parrot  
(off-stage voice — French)   Adèle Ratignolle   Monsieur Ratignolle  
Mademoiselle Reisz   Victor Lebrun   Mariequita   Monsieur Farival   Doctor  
Mandelet

### NARRATOR

#### ★ BEAT — Morning brightness — Edna’s hopeful reckoning

*Open with the buoyancy of morning light — this is Edna at her most willfully optimistic, reasoning herself into hope after a night of despondency. The internal logic is clear but fragile; read it with the brightness of someone who genuinely believes what she is telling herself, while keeping the faintest undertone of effort. The detail of her imagining Robert’s morning routine — walking down one street, turning the corner, bending over his desk — is tender, almost domestic. Do not undercut it; let her have the moment.*

The morning was full of sunlight and hope. Edna could see before her no denial—only the promise of excessive joy. She lay in bed awake, with bright eyes full of speculation. The words she had turned over and over in her mind—“He loves you, poor fool”—if she could but get that conviction firmly fixed in her mind, what mattered about the rest? She felt she had been childish and unwise the night before in giving

herself over to despondency. She recapitulated the motives which no doubt explained Robert's reserve. They were not insurmountable; they would not hold if he really loved her; they could not hold against her own passion, which he must come to realize in time. She pictured him going to his business that morning. She even saw how he was dressed; how he walked down one street, and turned the corner of another; saw him bending over his desk, talking to people who entered the office, going to his lunch, and perhaps watching for her on the street. He would come to her in the afternoon or evening, sit and roll his cigarette, talk a little, and go away as he had done the night before. But how delicious it would be to have him there with her! She would have no regrets, nor seek to penetrate his reserve if he still chose to wear it.

★ **BEAT — Letters — children, husband, and Arobin**

*A sequence of three letters, each a different register: the child's scrawl (warm, charming — read it with genuine delight), the husband's letter (practical, financially self-congratulatory — read it with a faint, dry coolness), and Arobin's midnight note (ardent and slightly ridiculous, but not without its power). Edna's replies reveal her state: cheerful to the children, evasive to Léonce, and entirely silent to Arobin — she put it under Célestine's stove-lid. That last gesture should land like a period.*

Edna ate her breakfast only half dressed. The maid brought her a delicious printed scrawl from Raoul [*rah-OOL*], expressing his love, asking her to send him some bonbons, and telling her they had found that morning ten tiny white pigs all lying in a row beside Lidie's big white pig.

A letter also came from her husband, saying he hoped to be back early in March, and then they would get ready for that journey abroad which he had promised her so long, which he felt now fully able to afford; he felt able to travel as people should, without any thought of small economies—thanks to his recent speculations in Wall Street.

Much to her surprise she received a note from Arobin [*AR-oh-ban*], written at midnight from the club. It was to say good morning to her, to hope she had slept well, to assure her of his devotion, which he trusted she in some faintest manner returned.

All these letters were pleasing to her. She answered the children in a cheerful frame of mind, promising

them bonbons, and congratulating them upon their happy find of the little pigs.

She answered her husband with friendly evasiveness, —not with any fixed design to mislead him, only because all sense of reality had gone out of her life; she had abandoned herself to Fate, and awaited the consequences with indifference.

To Arobin's note she made no reply. She put it under Célestine [*say-les-TEEN*]'s stove-lid.

**★ BEAT — Robert does not come — days of waiting and the drive with Arobin**

*The chapter's long descending arc. Each sentence about Robert not coming should accumulate weight — read 'Robert did not come that day. She was keenly disappointed. He did not come the following day, nor the next' with quiet, measured repetition, like a clock ticking. The restraint of 'she avoided any occasion which might throw her in his way' is the hardest, most dignified detail: she is refusing to chase him. The drive with Arobin on the Shell Road is a concession to another kind of aliveness — the horses, the speed, the night — but not a cure. The final two sentences, stripped bare — 'There was no despondency when she fell asleep that night; nor was there hope when she awoke in the morning' — are among the novel's most precise. Read them slowly and drop your voice slightly on 'hope.'*

Edna worked several hours with much spirit. She saw no one but a picture dealer, who asked her if it were true that she was going abroad to study in Paris.

She said possibly she might, and he negotiated with her for some Parisian studies to reach him in time for the holiday trade in December.

Robert did not come that day. She was keenly disappointed. He did not come the following day, nor the next. Each morning she awoke with hope, and each night she was a prey to despondency. She was tempted to seek him out. But far from yielding to the impulse, she avoided any occasion which might throw her in his way. She did not go to Mademoiselle Reisz [*mad-mwah-ZEL REES*]'s nor pass by Madame Lebrun [*luh-BRUHN*]'s, as she might have done if he had still been in Mexico.

When Arobin, one night, urged her to drive with him, she went—out to the lake, on the Shell Road. His horses were full of mettle, and even a little unmanageable. She liked the rapid gait at which they spun along, and the quick, sharp sound of the horses' hoofs on the hard road. They did not stop anywhere to eat or to drink. Arobin was not needlessly imprudent. But they ate and they drank when they regained

Edna's little dining-room—which was comparatively early in the evening.

It was late when he left her. It was getting to be more than a passing whim with Arobin to see her and be with her. He had detected the latent sensuality, which unfolded under his delicate sense of her nature's requirements like a torpid, torrid, sensitive blossom.

There was no despondency when she fell asleep that night; nor was there hope when she awoke in the morning.

— *END OF CHAPTER 35* —